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N. E. C. C.

NEWS BULLETIN

OF THE NEAR EAST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

"FROM IRAN TO MOROCCO-FROM TURKEY TO THE SUDAN"

MAY, 1956

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NEWS BULLETIN OF THE NEAR EAST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL FOR MISSIONARY CO-OPORATION

From Iran to Morocco **From Turkey to the Sudan**

May 1956

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EDITORIAL

"...upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring..." Whenever the Mediterranean in winter abandons its millpond smoothness, the editor of this Bulletin can hear "the sea and the waves roaring" as he ministers to the spiritual needs of his congregation in his Church at Beirut. "Distress of nations, with perplexity" is writ large in banner headlines in the newspapers of the West. To many readers it is somewhat impersonal, but to us, who are on the spot and therefore intimately concerned, it is a very different matter. "People Matter"—in the Arab World

it is always personal relations that count, personal relations with other Christians of many Churches that enrich our sense of fellowship, personal relations with those outside that reveal to us the many problems for which Christianity and the spirit of Christian service is the only solution.

Later years may look back on 1956 as a significant milestone in the history of the Near East Christian Council. In 1956 we shall have, for the first time, a full-time Executive Secretary. Dr. Harry Dorman has been released by his Mission for this work as from June 1st., and he will be able to make those visits and contacts that are absolutely necessary if the Near East Christian Council is to be a vital agency in advancing the cause of missionary co-operation in this area. In 1956 we hope that Dr. Kenneth Cragg will be able to establish a Centre for Islamic Studies; his headquarters will be in Jerusalem, but the courses for study will be held in various centres in the Near East. The object is not language study nor history, but to enable workers in this field to make a realistic approach to the Muslim with the knowledge of what the average Muslim thinks. In 1956 will be held the second Beirut Conference on the Refugee Problem. It is obvious even to those with a very limited knowledge of the Near East that settled conditions in these countries depend on a solution of this problem; the whole problem is bedevilled by politics, but a Christian approach can help in solving it.

Finally the editor would be grateful for many more reports, many more letters, photographs from various areas suitable for use on the front of the Bulletin—and will some Christian please provide Bishop Thompson in Iran with the funds that are needed to buy that Persian typewriter and pay for the necessary secretarial help that will make the Bible Study Correspondence Course an even greater success?

FELLOWSHIP—OR SEPARATION?

(This article is based on a book recently published—"The Fellowship of the Gospel", by Frank Colquhoun, published by the Evangelical Alliance. It is a short book, only sixty pages, but it has a clear New Testament message for an age of increasing co-operation between the Churches).

It is an incontrovertible fact that our world stands in need of the Gospel as never before. It is therefore sad that lack of co-operation has weakened Christian witness and Christian progress.

It is no rare thing to hear men of the world criticizing Christian workers for "always squabbling about unimportant details". The problem is by no means an academic one; it is a matter of real and practical importance. On the positive side, the key word is "Fellowship"; on the negative side it is "Separation". On the one hand, to what extent should Christians enjoy fellowship with other Christians who do not share their opinions in matters of faith and practice? On the other hand, when is it the duty of Christians to separate themselves from others so as not to compromise their own distinctive witness? It is possible, of course, to put too much stress upon the ideal of fellowship and thus create a false unity which lacks a solid foundation in Christian doctrine. From the theological point of view there are definite limits to comprehension; to compromise with error and unbelief is too high a price to pay. There is too a need for separation—separation from the spirit of the world, separation from moral evil, separation from false doctrine which is contrary to the Word of God. But the Bible has much more tosay about the positive value of fellowship than about mere negative separation.

Any reading of the Gospels shows that Jesus Himself was no "separatist"; he mixed freely with all manner of people, without regard for their social background, moral standards, or religious views. Of the contemporaries of our Lord the Pharisees—as their name denotes—were the "separated ones". Jesus was a "separated" Man in the sense that His whole life was set apart to the service of God; but He was never "exclusive" in the sense that He stood aloof from men, In speaking to His followers He stressed the duty of fellowship and in His teaching He made clear the mixed constitution of the visible Church. In the parable of the Tares and the Wheat (Matt. 13.24-30, 36-43) Jesus taught two important truths about "separation" in relation to the Kingdom of Heaven. The first is that separation is God's work, and not man's; the second is that separation will take place hereafter, not now. The later Parable of the Drag-Net has the same teaching (Matt. 13.48-50). In another key passage, "If thy brother sin against thee..." (Matt. 18.15-17), Jesus does indeed speak of separation, but only as a last and final resort. Every endeavour is to be made to heal the breach, and in the end the matter is to be decided by the concerted verdict of the Church, not by private opinion or personal prejudice.

Again, Jesus rebukes John for saying, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade Him, because

he followeth not with us" (Luke 9.49,50), and teaches the lesson of tolerance. But how often so-called Christians today condemn those who "follow not with them" in the sense that they do not belong to their particular denomination or agree with their theological opinions or repeat their shibboleths! "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13.34,35)—these are solemn words spoken by Jesus on the eve of His Passion. "By this!" What is this badge which marks off the follower of Christ from other men? Orthodoxy? Moral rectitude? Evangelistic passion? No, it is none of these things, though they all are desirable and essential. The badge of a Christian is his love for his fellows. In His "high priestly" prayer in John xvii our Lord prays "that they may all be one", the unity which He seeks for His disciples is of the same kind as that which exists between Himself and the Father—"even as we are one". The unity of the Father and the Son is part of the mystery of the Holy Trinity which the human intellect can never fully comprehend, but at least we do understand that within the Godhead there is a distinction of Persons, each of Whom maintains His identity without being merged into the Others. Is it this kind of unity, a unity in diversity, a unity compatible with variety, which our Lord lays down as the pattern for His Church?

When we leave the Gospels for the book of the Acts we soon find a key phrase, "with one accord", which occurs at the beginning and the end of the chapter which records the outpouring of Holy Spirit. Those early Christians had their differences of opinion, but they were not given to quarrelling over minor and unimportant points, and when they did quarrel, they made every attempt to settle the matter under the direction of the Holy Spirit. In those days the Gospel was a unifying force, not the cause of schism and division. In the common life of the early Church all races, colours and classes mingled. Is this so in the twentieth century? The Gospel brought into being a new quality of fellowship in which all were truly one in Christ.

The writers of the New Testament Epistles are alive to the importance of Christian unity and the peril of divisions in the Church. It is some comfort to this generation of Christians to know that from its very beginnings the Church of God has been threatened by "separation" of a wrong kind. The Apostle Paul did everything within his power to preserve the unity of the Church; some of his strongest criticism is for those who dare to form factions within the fellowship of God's people. To the

Church at Corinth he addresses the question, "Is Christ divided?" and then to the divided believers he says, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ". There is here a suggestion that a tendency towards separation is a sign of spiritual immaturity. Far from its being—as some would claim today—a mark of great spirituality, it is an indication of a "carnal" or selfish outlook. Later in the same Epistle there is the passage, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ" (I Cor. 12.12). It is worth noting that earlier in the same chapter the Apostle uses three times the expression, "There are diversities..." God, Who wills man's unity in Christ, is a God of variety; in the sphere of grace, as in the realm of nature, there may be differences without disharmony. The Epistle to the Ephesians has much to say about the unity of the Church—"...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..." (Eph. 4.5,6). The Church is one because Christ is one. He is the centre; and if we are united at the centre in the great fundamental truths of the Gospel, we need not worry overmuch if we are divided at the circumference over secondary matters concerning church government, ritual and administration.

St. James in his Epistle protests against the barrenness of a dead orthodoxy which is divorced from love and good works. He says in effect that orthodoxy is not enough, and in this he echoes the Sermon on the Mount, "By their fruits ye shall know them". "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren", says St. John (I John 3.14). It is the love which serves the brethren which counts; he does not say, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we are sound in Christian doctrine and believe the Bible from cover to cover." III John, though a very short Epistle, has in it a grim warning for all those who with pontifical authority assert that their theology is the only "sound" theology. There is Diotrephes who "loveth to have the pre-eminence" and "casteth them out of the Church". How well we know these self—appointed popes who reject out of hand all those who do not unquestioningly accept their own particular dogma! It is noteworthy too that in the Seven Letters to the Churches in the book of the Revelation members were called upon to repent, but in no case were they told to leave the Church and form other sects.

So much for "Fellowship". There is no getting away from

the fact that throughout the New Testament there are earnest appeals to maintain unity and a constant awareness of the danger of divisions. The call is not so much to "come out" as to "come together". But now we must deal with the question of separation. There are very definitely passages which enforce this as a duty, and it would be dishonest to ignore them. The New Testament clearly indicates that there are limits to fellowship. "Peace at any price" is not a Christian maxim as far the unity of the Church is concerned. The relevant passages fall into two distinct classes, separation on moral grounds and separation on doctrinal grounds, and as a result two important principles emerge. The most solemn passages are those which lay upon Christians the duty of abstaining from fellowship with professed believers who are evil-doers and not living holy lives. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5.1-11) were not judged for heresy; they were judged for acting a living lie whereby they sought to glorify themselves in the eyes of men. In II Cor. 6.17—"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate"—St. Paul is issuing a challenge to Christians to separate themselves from the pagan, idolatrous world; he is certainly not suggesting that Christians should separate from one another. There are more warnings against men of immoral life in the Epistles than there are against men holding erroneous opinions. In Acts 15.36-41 we find Paul and Barnabas separating from one another. But they did not part company because of a futile theological squabble; it was a disagreement on a matter of missionary policy, involving certains personal considerations.

The separatists of the twentieth century appear to concentrate on the doctrinal issue whereas in the New Testament there is much more emphasis on separation from evil than there is on separation from error. But there very definitely are certain passages which speak of separation where false doctrine is concerned; however, in each case the false doctrine in question touches some primary theological issue and is not concerned with a matter of only secondary importance. In such cases separation is justified, but only because the essential truth of the Gospel is imperilled.

When and in what circumstances does the New Testament enforce the duty of separation among Christian people on theological grounds? There are not many references to this subject. The New Testament does not seem to envisage believers contending with one another because of their differing theological interpretations, and of course it may reasonably be said that when

the New Testament was written there had not been time for many heresies to develop within the Church. There is the example of the Council at Jerusalem in Acts 15 at which it was reported that the Judaizing party were trying to enforce circumcision for all Gentile converts. The issue at stake was vital to the life of the Church. Was salvation by grace alone, through faith in Christ? Or was it by grace and law, faith and works? In essence this was the issue that had to be faced again at the time of the Reformation; the Council at Jerusalem, like the Reformers, had no hesitation in taking their stand on the grace of Christ—"We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they" (Acts 15.11)—and, what is more, they were conscious of Divine guidance in reaching this decision, for they preface their "findings" with the words, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us". Where a doctrine as important as this is concerned, compromise is quite out of the question. It is, of course, the same wrong teaching which provokes Paul to hurl his anathemas at his opponents in the Epistle to the Galatians.

Other examples in the New Testament are concerned with the doctrine of the Person of Christ, and it can be said with some confidence that any group of believers who go wrong in regard to the Person of Christ go wrong altogether. In writing to the Colossians Paul warns them, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain decit", and it appears that he was attacking a heretical variant of Christianity, a brand of Gnosticism which combined Greek mysticism with Jewish ritualism. The same is true of I John, where the writer is attacking heretics who denied that Jesus was the Messiah. Once again it is an indispensable article of belief that is involved. But it is not without significance that the apostle remarks, "They went out from us". (I John 2.19). He does not say, "We turned them out", nor yet, "We went out from them". The false teachers separated themselves of their own accord from the Church. The same injunction is found in II John 1—"many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh". Here those who are condemned apparently deny the Incarnation of the Son of God.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter". It is not always easy to decide when there is an apparent conflict between the claims of grace and truth. Is it possible to maintain a right balance between loyalty to the Gospel and loyalty to the law of love? Certain principles do very definitely emerge.

1. We must hold fast to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in all its divine fulness and scriptural purity. The Gospel is the bond of fellowship, and outside of it there is no hope of unity. Nothing is to be gained by watering down our message, for it is only in Christ that we have any hope of "being one".

2. We must humbly recognise that the Gospel is bigger than ourselves and that there is in it room for more than one point of view, more than one line of interpretation. The writers of the New Testament differ from one another in their presentation of the message. The four Gospels are the most obvious example; each of the four portraits of Christ is marked by its own distinctive features. It is as though the person of Christ is so great that no one portrait could possibly convey the whole picture. The differing viewpoints are complementary, and not contradictory, and this variety of outlook adds much to the richness of the New Testament revelation. Let us therefore be warned. Our conception of the Gospel can be too narrow, and it is an undeniable fact that those who claim to have a monopoly of the truth are usually those who, in actual fact, possess the smallest part of it. In addition, God's eternal truth and our human interpretation of it are not one and the same thing; one is final and infallible, the other is not. All too often in the past divisions in the Christian fellowship have been caused by a tragic failure to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential, between Gospel fact and human opinion. On the contrary we should be thankful that unity does not demand uniformity, and equally that variety need not spell variance.

3. We must recognize that orthodoxy by itself is not enough, not is purity of doctrine the only criterion by which our judgement of others is to be formed. Theological systems cannot take into account that personal relationship with our Lord and its fruits in daily life which are what really matter in the end. Dr. Graham Scroggie remarked that when people ask him, "Are you sound?" they usually mean, "Do you agree with my opinions?" In any case, purity of doctrine can never in fact be safeguarded by credal systems; human language is, at the best, an inadequate instrument for defining and expressing the eternal truth of God.

4. We must be on our guard against a rigid spirit which denies the essential liberty of the Gospel. In some Protestant circles

this spirit finds expression in a narrow, intolerant, censorious attitude which savours strongly of Romanism. "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." We cannot, and must not, reduce the Christian religion to a number of rules and regulations. We must not fall into the snare of popery by creating a cast—iron system of faith which allows no freedom of thought and legislates in detail as to what everybody must believe and say and do.

Finally we must face the facts as they are today. There was never more need of honest Christian co-operation. Every Church has something to offer for the redemption of man from the perils and perplexities of this modern chaos. But little is gained by too hasty an approach to visible reunion, which could only be attained at the cost of papering over yawning cracks of unresolved disagreement on faith and order. Let us rather follow the Anglican Prayer Book which surely strikes a right balance when it teaches us to pray God" to inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord... that all they that do confess Thy holy Name may agree in the truth of Thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love."

"IN COMMITTEE"

The Executive Committee of the N.E.C.C. held its annual meeting for 1956 on January 16, 17 and 18, in Beirut, Lebanon, at the home of Dr. Harry Dorman. The meeting had been arranged earlier in the year than is usual in order that it might coincide with the visit to the Near East of Dr. Norman Goodall, Executive Secretary of the Joint Committee of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Dr. Norman Goodall was present at every session of the Committee, and his expert knowledge of the working of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council enabled him to give the Committee much very valuable advice. The following were also present: — Rev. Labib Mishriky, Chairman (Cairo, Egypt); Rev. Adle Nakhosteen, Vice-Chairman (Teheran, Iran); Rev. Willis McGill, Treasurer (Cairo, Egypt); Rev. Harry G. Dorman, Jr., Executive Secretary (Beirut, Lebanon); Mr. Habib Said, Literature Secretary (Cairo, Egypt); Rev. Michael Wilkinson, Editor of the News Bulletin (Beirut, Lebanon); Rev. Farid Audeh (Beirut, Lebanon); Rev. Horace M. McMullen (Aleppo, Syria); Rev. Edwin M. Luidens (Amarah, Iraq); Miss Frances E. Scott

(Beirut, Lebanon); Rev. William Sage Woolworth (Istanbul, Turkey). Dr. Paul Abrecht of the Study Division of the World Council of Churches spoke at one session. Canon Campbell Milford of the Church Missionary Society was also present at some sessions.

The opening devotions were led by the Rev. H. G. Dorman. Dr. Dorman based his devotions on the passage—John 12.20-26—recording the presence of "certain Greeks" at the feast in Jerusalem and their request, "Sir, we would see Jesus". Consciously or subconsciously there must be many in the Near East feeling the same need, and the action of Philip and Andrew must be repeated many, many times by Churches and Missions so that the way to Christ may be made easier.

The Secretary reported that it had been unanimously agreed that members of the N.E.C.C., especially Churches, should be urged to correspond directly with the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Voice of America, and the Near East Broadcasting Company with a request that time should be allotted "on the air" for Scripture readings in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. At a later session of the Committee Mr. Harold Fisher of the N.E.C.C. Committee for Radio-Audio-Visual Aids gave a comprehensive review of what had been already done in this respect and the progress made in establishing a broadcasting studio at the Beirut College for Women. The possibility of establishing a Christian broadcasting station had been considered, but the request had been refused. In any case so ambitious a project would call for long preparation and much greater expense than N.E.C.C. can at present face. It might be possible to secure the interest of more of the Churches and make a second request in the name of a wider Christian community, but this would raise some fundamental problems of organization and co-operation. All Christian Churches would be entitled to benefit by the use of a Christian station, but they would not necessarily share in the administration of it.

The Executive Committee, seeing the need for the extension of the work of the N.E.C.C., and envisaging possibilities for the foundation of ecumenical work in the Near East on a broader basis, approved the appointment of a full-time Executive Secretary. In regard to this there were financial difficulties (which the International Missionary Council would help to solve) and personnel difficulties, it being inevitable that anybody capable of undertaking this work would already be in a "key" post. There was some discussion as to whether a national or a missionary from the West

should be appointed. The field was surveyed for possible candidates and it was finally decided to ask the American Presbyterian Mission and the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to release the Rev. H. G. Dorman for a period of three years. This permission has now been granted and Dr. Dorman will be available for full-time duties as from June 1, 1956.

At the Conference in 1955 there had been much discussion about a possible Centre for Islamic Studies with a full-time Director. The Executive Committee had approached Dr. Kenneth Cragg who had accepted the invitation. Satisfactory financial provision is being arranged, and the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem has offered Dr. Cragg a canonry in St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem.

The Secretary, in a brief report, pointed out that until there was a full-time Secretary the work simply did not get done. He felt that we were out of touch with Aden, Ethiopia and Algeria, though they might reasonably be supposed to belong to the area covered by N.E.C.C. The Treasurer made a brief financial statement and, like all Treasurers, pleaded for increased contributions. The Literature Secretary reported progress in the important matters of administration and distribution; it is obviously futile to produce Christian literature in Arabic unless there are adequate facilities for the sale of it! Four societies were working in co-operation to achieve this. The first Sunday in March would again be kept as Literature Sunday. The fellowship of Christian Writers were still working on books on the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation; no attempt has been made to confront the Muslim world with these two doctrines since the days of Douglas Thornton and Temple Gairdner, and it is a matter of vital importance. Eight "World Christian Books" had already appeared in England; of these three were already published in Arabic, three were in course of translation, the other two had been rejected for theological and political reasons. The Report of the Editor of the Bulletin was brief and to the point, stressing the impossibility of making bricks without straw!

Dr. Norman Goodall brought greetings to N.E.C.C. from the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. He explained the relation of these two bodies to Christian Councils throughout the world. In this connexion there was a lively discussion as to the relations of N.E.C.C. with the ancient Churches of the East; some doubted whether the missionary purpose of a Christian Council could be combined with work for

ecumenical unity. The general opinion appeared to be that such a development is certainly not impossible, but that it would not be easy to attain. This difficulty arose again when the Executive Committee were discussing the constitution and qualifications for membership of N.E.C.C. Perhaps the best comment lies in words of Dr. Kramer, quoted by Dr. Goodall at another meeting during his visit to Beirut—"Our task is to deepen the Mission-consciousness of the Churches and deepen the Church-consciousness of the Missions".

Dr. Paul Abrecht, Secretary of the Department of Church and Society of the Study Division of the World Council of Churches, explained to the Committee plans for a projected study on "The Common Christian Responsibility towards Areas of Rapid Social Change". We have only to write down three letters, O,I,L, to realise that this very definitely applies to the area with which we are concerned. Such a study would cover such subjects as:—"The Duties of the Christian Citizen"—"The Problems of Rural Life"—"The Problems of Urbanization and Industrialisation"—"Foreign Assistance, and the Impact of the West on the East".

The Executive Committee did valuable work in revising the Constitution of N.E.C.C., but this is not a matter that can be briefly reported. It must suffice here to suggest that N.E.C.C. has reached a transitional stage in its development when a council of councils must become a council of Churches and Missions. Article II of the Constitution was re-drafted to read as follows:—

"The purpose (of the Council) shall be to serve in its structure and in its action as a witness to the unity and mission of the Christian Church in the Near East.

The functions of the Council shall be:—

1. Bringing representatives together for mutual understanding and fellowship.
2. Common planning of Christian strategy.
3. Co-ordination of work, and comity.
4. Common work in areas of service where common action promises better results than separate action.
5. Serving as the instrument of ecumenical life in the Near East in relation to the W.C.C. and the I.M.C.
6. Studying the central issues of the relevance of the Gospel for this time and place.

In all its decisions the Council shall seek to express the deepest aspirations of its constituent bodies, shall remain responsible to them, and shall not bind any such body against its will."

Other matters discussed by the Executive Committee were the forthcoming Beirut Conference on the Refugee Situation of which a note will be found elsewhere in the Bulletin, the possibility of forming—or re-forming—a Near East Christian Medical Association, the sending of a deputation to Iraq and the Arabian Gulf to encourage a movement of church co- operation, and a request from the Home and Family Committee that the N.E.C.C. should sponsor a Home and Family Life Institute. A letter was received from Moderator and Clerk of the Synod of the Nile applying for membership of N.E.C.C. This was received with joy, and the Secretary was instructed to give the Synod a hearty welcome. This means that 25,000 more Christians are closely concerned with N.E.C.C. The prophet of old said, "Out of Egypt have I called my son"; the Synod of the Nile are assured of the prayers of N.E.C.C. that in increasing numbers the people of Egypt may call back the Saviour into the hearts of the Egyptian people.

THE BEIRUT CONFERENCE ON THE PROBLEM OF THE ARAB REFUGEES

In 1951 the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council convened, in Beirut, a Conference on the problem of the Arab Refugees from Palestine. This Conference did a great deal to awake the conscience of the world to the extent of this appalling human tragedy-men and women made in the image of God Himself going to waste and gradually deteriorating as the weary months passed. At the same time it was the cause of a vast increase in Christian giving and enabled the N.E.C.C. Refugee Committee to start on the substantial programme which it still maintains. "We are convinced that there can be no permanent solution of the problem of the refugees until there is a settlement of the outstanding political differences between the Arab States and Israel". That is a quotation from the 1951 Conference Statement. Now the "weary months" have become weary years, more than the "seven lean years" of which we read in the Bible. In the present unsettled state of the Near East a political settlement is as far off as ever. After extensive consultations with Arab representatives in the United Nations and elsewhere and with many other advisers the sponsors of the 1951 Conference are convinced that a second Conference can be both timely and useful.

The Conference will be held at the American University, Beirut, Lebanon, from May 21 to May 25, 1956, and the terms of references are:—

i. To review the position of the refugees in the continued absence of a political settlement.

ii. To review current relief needs and programmes, particularly in the light of the U.N. resolution of December, 1955, and to ensure, in the West, the continuance of concern for relief and rehabilitation measures.

iii. Without propounding political solutions themselves, to seek greater contemporary understanding, both in the Near East and the West, of the political issues that must be faced.

The Conference meets at a time when the political situation in the Near East is absorbing the attention of all the statesmen of the world, at a time when the refugees are tinder that any political agitation may well ignite. Every representative should be reminded of the words of Professor Nabih Faris at the 1951 Conference—"You have come a long way to discuss this problem because you are genuinely interested in doing what is right. You have in the past few days been on the road to Jericho. You cannot, you will not, look and pass on the other side".

AN APPEAL FOR A PERMANENT SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM

We, the members of the Near East Christian Council meeting in Beirut in 1955, feel impelled to issue a renewed appeal to the Christian Churches of the world to call for a permanent constructive solution to the long-standing plight of the Palestinian Arab Refugees in the Near East. Seven years have passed by since almost a million people were forced from their homes during the period of terrorism and warfare that accompanied the UN—decreed Partition of Palestine in 1948. The surrounding countries or territories into which these refugees fled were largely unable to absorb these masses of dislocated people, and were moreover unwilling to accept the responsibility of caring for refugees whose dislocation resulted from the partition vote of the United Nations General Assembly. The UN through its Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees has provided minimum shelter, food rations, medical care, and elementary education for all registered refugees. A very small number of refugees have individually managed to attain a normal degree of rehabilitation and integration into the society where they live, but for the most part governments and people have waited for constructive action by international authority to provide redress for the injustice visit-

ed upon the Palestinian people. Israel has not permitted Arab Refugees to return to their homes or property, and no large-scale resettlement has been permitted in neighbouring lands pending political and economic solutions of the Palestine problem. Consequently, the refugee situation has gone on, with natural increase adding to the numbers involved, and with continued idleness and frustration sapping the energy and spirit of the 901,000 human beings who are the victims of this present-day human disaster.

The Christian Churches of the world, aware of the moral and humanitarian issues involved in the Palestinian refugee problem, sent representatives to a conference held in Beirut in May, 1951, under the auspices of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches. From this conference emerged a coordination of earlier scattered efforts into a unified program of refugee relief under the Near East Christian Council. A bright spot in an otherwise dark situation has been the generous support from many sources, the splendid cooperation, and the significant demonstration of Christian mercy carried on through the years of this program. However, we would reiterate the statement of the Beirut Conference in 1951: "We are convinced that there can be no permanent solution of the problem of the Palestinian refugees until there is a settlement of the outstanding political differences between the Arab States and Israel. Churches are not competent to lay down the lines of a political solution. It is the duty of all governments, in cooperation with the United Nations, to press for, and to facilitate, an early and agreed settlement, as an indispensable condition for achieving a lasting solution of the refugee problem."

The Near East Christian Council in 1955 believes that these sentences, and the entire message of the 1951 conference, have lost none of their force but have become more urgently true by the passing of four more years of unresolved misery on the part of the refugees in the Near East. A solution of this human problem is the key to the establishment of political peace, economic stability, and accompanying social progress in the entire Near East. The other refugees in the Near East, who are likewise the object of Christian concern, the persecuted and dislocated members of the Jewish people who are settled in the new state of Israel, will profit equally by a just and constructive solution which will bring peace to the Holy Land.

The settlement for which all right-thinking people long, and from which all the victims of injustice will benefit, awaits a sufficient exercise of concern by the national governments whose

policies determine international action. Such concern can be created only by an aroused public opinion in many lands, and the most effective agency in developing such opinions is the Church of Christ and the conviction and conscience of millions of Christian people.

Therefore, the Near East Christian Council issues this renewed and ardent appeal to every Church and every Christian person to pray and work for an early just settlement, after seven years of exile, for the Palestinian Refugees.

NEAR EAST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL
BEIRUT, LEBANON

(This Appeal was issued by the Near East Christian Council very soon after the N.E.C.C. Bulletin went to press in August, 1955. It attracted worldwide attention, was translated into many languages, and was quoted, sometimes in toto, by the religious and secular Press. It has a particular relevance at this moment when a second Beirut Conference on the Refugee Problem is about to be held).

WHITHER ISLAM?

(This article consists of extracts from articles and speeches by recognised authorities on Islam and the Muslim World. The sources are as follows:—

The Christian Church in Non-Communist Muslim Asia—Hendrik Kraemer, D.Th.; (The International Review of Missions)

The Arab World and the Christian Debt—Kenneth Cragg. D. Phil.; (The International Review of Missions)

Islam in the Modern World—Addresses presented at the Fifth Annual Conference on Middle East Affairs, sponsored by the Middle East Institute. The name of the speaker and his subject is appended to the extracts in each case.)

The Near and Middle East is dominated by two main facts. It is an Islamic world, and it is a world consisting of young newly formed states, with certain elements of instability and full of dynamic possibilities. The Near and Middle East is the most deeply Muslim—impregnated part of the Islamic world. Islam is not only its religion, but it is there that Islam developed into the vast theological, socio-religious and cultural system which has enabled it to play so great a role in human history since the Middle Ages.

In Arabia stood the cradle of Islam as a militant religion, prophetic by origin, expansionist by inclination. The Near and Middle East, however, became the area where this political and prophetic religion changed into a system, a clear-cut pattern of life. From among the peoples of the Near and Middle East arose the men who created this system through four formative centuries, and thereby moulded the peoples' life..

..one of the deeper causes of an over-ready assumption of irreconcilable conflict between God—believing Islam and God—denying Communism is unawareness of the fact that the word "religion" has many connotations in Islam quite different from those which it has in Christendom. Religion in Islam, I repeat, is essentially, though not exclusively, a social and political notion, whereas the majority of western observers, when they are convinced Christians, conceive of it primarily as a personal relationship with God...

What of the Christian Church in Muslim Asia? It is well known that the Church there, as far missionary work is concerned, occupies a precarious position. Missionary work in the Near and Middle East labours under increasingly severe restrictions. Where churches, however small, have resulted from missionary labours, all will depend on the inner strength of the community of Christians.... in the framework of the Islamic world...

The ancient Churches of the East... The great question today and for the near future is: how do these Churches meet this situation? By complaining, by yielding, by accommodation, by introvert solidarity, or by an inner revival and a courageous witness in life and world? It is impossible to say without having made a thorough investigation on the spot. But it is certain that these are vital questions and that the general situation challenges the Orthodox Churches to break loose from their age-old provincial imprisonments, and to find each other in a true oecumenical encounter, to concentrate on spiritual revival...

(The Church in Non-Communist Muslim Asia—Hendrik Kraemer, D. Th.)

There is apostolic precedent, too, for this particular interest in a particular segment of humanity. The listeners on the day of Pentecost were enumerated according to their racial and local communities. "Arabians", whoever precisely they may have been, closed the list. It is the inner crisis in the Arab soul today which is the immediate inspiration of what is here in mind. We will not stay to discuss the exact extent of what is described as "the Arab world", or to remind ourselves that, like other racial

descriptives, it is inclusive of much diversity. The broad significance of the phrase is clear enough, as used in such titles as "the Arab League." It covers the heart of the Arabic-speaking area which is the Near East. The most familiar feature of that world is unhappily the fact that some three quarters of a million or more of its people are refugees and that they remain so after bitter years of exile. The practical needs of that multitude have been upon the heart of the Church. Paradoxically enough, one of the brightest aspects of the Near Eastern scene today is the spirit of the Christian response which that catastrophe has evoked. Modest in resources and hampered by the political impasse, the ministry to refugees has at least offered itself as a human means of the Divine mercy and, so doing, has staked a claim to constructive comradeship in the Arab future... If the refugees are searching for a future, so is the entire Arab community. Their physical predicament may be taken as a parable of a spiritual quandary, less readily apparent but hardly less precarious, belonging to the Arab nations. It is a part of our practical duty to the one that we should seek to investigate and understand the other. If the first has been, and remains, a call to energetic action, the second is no less urgently an occasion of imaginative and honest sympathy. We shall not play a full part in the Arab world in neglect of either.

Perhaps the most obvious of the issues, and not the least paradoxical, is nationalism. The rise and development of Arab nationalism. The rise and development of Arab nationalism, since Muhammad Ali in Egypt gave it impulse, is a well—known theme. Its story was ably told by Mr. George Antonius in "The Arab Awakening"—a work which surveyed its social and literary, as well as its political origins. We are familiar enough with its disappointments at Versailles and after, and with the delays and complications which it suffered in the time between the wars. Then the grievous set-back of the partition of Palestine. It is necessary—without minimizzing the nature or the legacy of these struggles—to look more deeply at the whole meaning of nationalism in the Arab context. In one sense it is already an anachronism, since we have arrived at a point in world affairs at which nineteenth-century concepts are no longer workable. The units of viable existence in the mid-twentieh century are necessarily larger than nations. Moreover, Arab nationalism is the product of that westernism which it is its raison d'etre, on the negative side, to repudiate. It is western not simply in the sense that the western Powers provoked and educated the Arabs into it, but also in the sense that the territorial

bases of it were drawn by western hands. The present frontiers within which so much of Arab nationalism is so jealously fostered have little warrant either in history or geography.... It is indeed an odd paradox that the present boundaries of not a few Arab states, arbitrarily drawn by the West, have been sanctified in the short space of three decades by national feeling which in almost all else rejects those who gave it territorial expression... If—which may be disputed—it was an instance of the adage: "Divide and rule", then ceasing to rule has not meant ceasing to divide.

"We have suffered too much from religion", said a Jordan student to the writer. Such impatience is comprehensible when the young generation sees its society plagued by division over the interpretation of what should be the secret of its cohesion—namely a true religious faith. This impatience, feeling that nationalism is the only remaining allegiance worthy of devotion, becomes critical of all faiths.

> "In what faith ought I to live—now that the basic concepts of the traditional religions have shrunk into hollow catchwords and religious fellowships have degenerated into fossilized groupings, generating blind fanaticism, but not edifying communion, stimulating self-seeking attachments but not self-giving loyalties, and serving particular political purposes, disruptive of national unity, instead of promoting inward, joyful, loving, creative spiritual experience? Whither ought I to turn for guidance? Where am I to find fellowship?" (Dr. Fayez Sayegh in a speech entitled: "Understanding the Arab Mind," February 15, 1952)

..it is the Arabs who have paid the human price for the fulfilment of history's atonement to the Jews. The reproach of Jewry in the world was largely a European wrong. It has been righted at the expense of the Arabs..

..perhaps the biggest hurdle now in Arab Christian-Muslim relations is distance between Christian and Muslim religious terminology in Arabic. What Miss Constance Padwick wrote in 1938 is still sadly true.

> "There has been communication.. on matters of government, the market, the weather and the crops: but in religious matters practically no intercommunication. We are therefore faced with the fact that the religious Arabic of Islam and the religious Arabic of Christianity have become two languages. And this dichotomy is the more confusing because to a great

extent both use the same vocabulary, with meanings that have grown further and further apart."
(The Arab World and the Christian Debt—Kenneth Cragg, D.Phil.)

To the peoples of the Middle East the problem of adjusting Islam to the modern world is a matter of cultural survival, if not one of political survival as well....A direct attack on the low economic level at which the majority of the Islamic peoples live is not the complete answer; too often the ideological conflict is forgotten. In the long run the West can only win if it can convey a faith that the values it holds to be true point the way to a better life. (Preface to "Islam in the Modern World")

Economic contacts between the West and the Near East culminated in the discovery of oil in Iraq in the mid-20's and in Saudi Arabia in the early 30's, perhaps the most pregnant, the most significant single economic factor in the life of the Near East. Cultural, military, political, and economic contacts were built up in the past century and a half, producing a chain reaction in the minds of the peoples—psychological disorders and conflicts, dislocation of old loyalties, social stresses and tensions. Grafting new dynamic ideas like nationalism and political democracy on old traditions is not an easy thing; maladjustments almost always result. Out of this confusion—you might almost call it chaos, social, economic and political—three schools of thought began gradually to crystallize. There was first that represented by the Kemalist Turks who advocated a complete break with the past—as if such a break were possible, even with violent methods—severance of the people from their heritage, full acceptance of Western values, moulding the identity of the people after a dominating Western pattern....The motto of this school (you might call it "the left-wing school") was "Adopt Western civilization lock, stock, and barrel." But changing the cover of the head did not necessarily mean changing its contents. Old ideas began to creep back in under new guises.

At the opposite extreme (we might call it "right-wing") emerged the conservative group, represented by the bulk of the Arabian Peninsula, by the Wahhabis, who turned their backs on secularism, modernism, and Westernism, and others who still pursue a mirage of theocracy in the deserts of Hejaz and Yemen...

In between these two extremes—the left and the right—was the "middle-of-the-road" group, represented by Egypt and other parts of the Arab world. The path of the middle group in a sense

was harder than that of the two wings. In the case of the extremes, once the decision was made—"We want to be Westernized," or "We will have nothing to do with Western influences and ideas"—once the decision was made, it became comparatively easy to proceed. On the other hand, the middle group faces a continuous selective process—choosing and picking, eliminating, adopting, adapting.... How can we maintain the values in our heritage in the face of the inroad of new values from the West? ..Out of the debris of this Near Eastern society—this Muslim society—one institution seems to have remained intact, one institution still speaks with authority: Islam as the religion. On the periphery, on the outside, changes have taken place and will continue to take place. But there is a solid core of principles and ideas involved in Islam, the religion, that apparently will continue to persist—the oneness of God, the prophecy of Muhammad, the mission of Muhammad, the holiness of the Qur'an. I did not find during my last visit a single Muslim who came out openly against these concepts.

So far we have reviewed the impact of the West on the East from the Eastern point of view. Looked at from the Western point of view, the trend is a two—way street—there are forces of propulsion from behind, but there should be stronger forces of attraction from in front. Nor should the bad effects of Western influence be overlooked. Unfortunately during the last decade or two, in particular, the impact of the West has not been all for the good. There is a striking contrast between the humanitarian ideas professed by Western missionaries, teachers, and preachers, and the disregard of human values by European and American politicians and warriors; a disparity between word and deed; an overemphasis on economic and nationalistic values...

(Middle East Institute—"Current Trends in Islam"—Philip K. Hitti.)

There was nothing more beautiful, in the semi-nomadic society of the prophet Muhammad, than to say the old prayers in unison, with the camel-drivers getting down from their camels. But how can a bank teller, or a taxicab driver, or a traffic policeman go through the five prayers a day in Cairo or Istambul? The same problem arises with Ramadan. It is not so difficult to fast from sunrise to sunset in the desert, if travel and work can be postponed to the cool of the night. But if you are, for instance, the conductor of a tram-car, on one of those hot August days in a city like Cairo—how are you going to get along without drinking or eating from sunrise to sunset, and get your work done?...

Most young Muslims today are not Qur'anic scholars, so

some of them have reacted in quite a different way-using Islam as a symbol of political loyalty. This had been particularly evident in countries under foreign control....A great many schoolboys keep Ramadan not so much because of religious conviction, but because they want to demonstrate the fact that are good Muslims and are not going to let any foreigners tread on their toes....In a country like Lebanon, where the Christian groups are strong, Islam becomes an important political rallying point in the effort to maintain the Muslims' position.

We Christians, even if we disregard Leviticus and some Pauline passages, do take seriously the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, and some of the beautiful passages which relate to modern life. The young Muslims are doing exactly the same thing with the Qur'an and the Hadith. Take a subject like peace. Sura 49 says: "make peace between your brethren, be pious before God, that upon you there may be compassion." The 4th Sura says: "There is no good in many of their conferences, except as someone enjoins chairity and kindness and peacemaking among the people." In a recent number of the "Islamic Review" Shaykh Muhammad Namur al-Khatib quotes a saying of the Prophet which I have never seen quoted before: "Shall I tell you what is better than fasting, prayers, or charity? Peacemaking among the people."

The Crusaders and the early missionaries felt that their views must be accepted by the Muslims whom they naively felt to be benighted. These days the outlook is quite different. The Christians living in the Middle East find themselves confronted by such overwhelming problems that they do not look down upon the Muslim. On the contrary, they want to take the Muslim by the hand and tackle these problems together. Perhaps by their united efforts and by a brotherly spirit of cooperation they can find the answers to some of these very difficult questions...

(Middle East Institute—"Comments on Spiritual and Moral Aspect of Current Trends in Islam"—Bayard Dodge.)

I ask you to come with me to a scene early in 1882. One Talbah Pasha is giving a party at his home in Cairo. Gathered there are several lively spirits of a growing revolutionary movement. Arabi Pasha, a colonel in the Army and Under Secretary for War, and Muhammad Abduh, a savant, litterateur, and theologian, both men of major status in Egypt, are two of the guests particularly involved in the country's vigorous stirrings.

For some months an increasingly vehement feeling had been developing that something radical must be done to advance democratic processes in Egypt. Muhammad Abduh, the thinker, was recognized as the guiding spirit, almost the father of this movement. Arabi Pasha was the spearhead. Yet on this occasion the two are disagreeing. Muhammad Abduh is taking the view of the typical gradualist: that the time is not ripe for violent action and that in any case violence will not permit the slow process necessary to reformulate the country's whole programme and to educate a new generation of Egyptians with purified and reformed ideas. Arabi Pasha, the activist, has no patience with what he calls dilatory tactics. Should the crisis come, he is ready to lead an armed uprising. Thus these two men would seem to symbolize the two topics which Dr. El-Zayyat and I are sharing this afternoon: Muhammad Abduh, the evolutionary leader, and Arabi Pasha, the revolutionary.

A few months later Arabi Pasha did lead an armed uprising—but failed to carry it to success. Before the year was over the British, having bombarded Alexandria, occupied the country.... Arabi Pasha, however, does not quite exemplify the Islamic revolutionary because his revolt, his revolutionary reaction, was only partly Islamic. He became known as Arabi "al-Misri", the Egyptian, and to some extent he was a nationalist rather than an Islamic revolutionry. His movement was the culmination of Islamic agitation, but it was not purely Islamic: the Egyptian emphasis was equally important.

Islam is in a predicament not so much because modernity challenges a system of ideas, but because it threatens a community....The first three or four centuries of Islam were ones of conquest and triumph. The conquerors of North Africa and Spain to the Pyrenees on the one hand, and of Central Asia on the other, constructed a new law, a new society, a new civilization. That fact has coloured the whole of Islam ever since. In contrast, Christianity was formed and expanded through centuries of oppression,—as the religion of the proletariat, as it were, of the Roman Empire. The Cross, the core of Christianity, is the symbol of suffering. Christianity is a religion of triumph out of suffering, of salvation in the midst of defeat. In striking contrast, Islam is a religion of triumph in success, of salvation through conquest and worldly power. Furthermore, year I of the Islamic era, the year 1 A.H., is not the year in which Muhammad was born, nor even the year in which the revelations began to come

to him, but the year in which he went to Medina and founded a state. Islam begins in history when Islam came to power as a community with its own laws and its own sovereignty....by and large, Christians have tried to express their faith in theology. Muslims, it seems to me, have expressed it chiefly in a social systme....While Christianity in recent years has moved toward a social Gospel, Islam has been a social gospel from the start.

Pakistan is the other astonishingly successful Islamic revolution. This immensely surging idea of the Muslim community of India in a short space of time created a new state and is now plunging ahead to build up that state in a most remarkable manner. In one basic way the revolutionary reaction of Pakistan has been just the opposite of Turkey's. The Turks may be said, to have modernity in search of religion. They have a modern state, they are now trying to reformulate Islam in terms that will be relevant to their new life. The Muslims of Pakistan, on the other hand, have religion in search of modernity. They have created their state on the basis of Islam, and are now trying to make it a modern state; they are feeling their way, pushing ahead in the face of opposition and cross-currents. The Pakistanis' problem is how to get modernity without losing their religion. The Turks' problem, with the new revival of Islam, is how to let religion back in without losing their modernity.

..nationalism, in its pure naked form, as it were, has failed in the Near East. It is an extremely potent force when it is anti-something, anti-West, anti-British, anti-Hindu; but nationalism is not a sufficient ideology for a positive constructive effort. Once the outside force, the irritant, disappears, there is that long pull of settling down, of working hard and of sacrificing personal interests to some ideal—to the community, to progress, to the next generation. Recent history in the Near East seems to show that by and large sheer nationalism is not an adequate basis for that generation. Recent history in the Near East seems to show that by and large sheer nationalism is not an adequate basis for that difficult, constructive task. Unless the ideal is in some way Islamic, the effort will simply fail....The Muslims are going through a time of crisis, a spiritual crisis of which they are quite aware. But so are we all. The 20th century is not an easy one to live in....In other words we are all involved together, as I think most people realize. They have their problems and we have ours....Yet it is my judgement that fundamentally the Muslims sense a basic kinship with Christendom (the ahl al-kitab concept)...

(Middle East Institute—"Islam Confronted by Western Secularism-Revolutionary Reaction"—Wilfred Cantwell Smith.)

Varying interpretations of Muslim civil law have been expected and provided for from the very beginning of Islam. Incorporating traditional laws into Muslim legislation showed an enlightened social outlook, and provided the elasticity necessary to any health government. Equally important is the Shari'a's consideration of ijma', "universal agreement", as one of the bases for legislation. Still more important is the permission Islam gives to any competent person to interpret or reinterpret the laws of Islam and to form his own school. The success of each school depends both on its soundness and on the degree of acceptance by the people. That is the principle of ijtihad....The reformers found in the Islamic principle of ijtihad the safety-valve for progress and social reform within Islam....Islam, as a civil organisation, through its acceptance of traditional law, 'adah, its consideration of universal agreement, ijma', and its adaptibility in meeting its changing circumstances through the ijtihad, was equipped from the very beginning with the elasticity to enable Islamic society to evolve normally without casting aside its basic principles...

(Middle East Institute—"Islam Confronted by Western Secularism-Evolutionary Reaction"—Muhammad Hassan el-Zayyat.)

About fifteen years ago an Arabic play called "Hassan, Cohen and Murcus" ran in Cairo for some time. As an allegory, it was done so beautifully that everybody enjoyed it no matter what his religious community. The house was packed for each performance. Hassan was the handsome, confident, cultured, well—dessed Muslim front for a drug concern, but he had no expertness in anything except how to make friends and establish relations with the government. Cohen was the conservative, careful financier who was the treasurer of the company, but he had little front. Murcus was the Coptic member of this drug company, a slightly dowdy chap, a practical operator. His know-how for getting things done in the community was what made the concern a success. When Murcus made a diplomatic engagenment for Hassan, Hassan always appeared and did his job well; when Murcus needed funds for some operation he convinced Mr. Cohen and the funds were forthcoming; but neither Mr. Hassan nor Mr. Cohen could quite get along unless they consulted Mr. Murcus. The fact that these ideas could be played with in the theatre and have the house full every time without anyone's objecting showed that nesses or strengths.

there was a great deal of tolerance and good will in Egypt among the communities and a willingness to laugh at each other's weak-

....it is a problem of loyalties: whether loyalty to the nation or an individual state, or loyalty to a cultural group, or loyalty to a worldwide concept of Islam. One very prominent Arab political figure said to me a short time ago, "You know, I'm supposed to be a nationalist, but I'm opposed to nationalism." I had always thought of him as a great patriot. He said, "I am first of all a Muslim, and Islam is international."

(Middle East Institute—"Islam's Attitude toward Minority Groups"—W. Wendell Cleland.)

THE CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN THE ARAB WORLD

This Conference was held in May, 1955, in Beirut, and was attended by forty-nine leaders who represented seven Protestant Churches and came from eight different Arab countries. The Conference was held under the auspices and by the invitation of the planning committee of the Near East Christian Council, and its aims were as follows:—

i. To strengthen the bonds of fellowship and friendship among the pastors and leaders of the Evangelical Churches in the area.
ii. To discuss the main theme of the Conference—"Christ calls the Churches in the Arab World to Unity and Mission".
iii. To study the problems and responsibilities of the Church in the Arab World.
iv. To find out ways and means for the formation of an "Arab Evangelical Fellowship" or an "Arab Evangelical Union" or an "Arab Evangelical Council".

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Dr. Farid Audeh, in his opening address lamented the failure of the Arab national Churches to give priority to missionary work in their activities. It seemed to him that this was due to one or other, or all, of the following reasons:—

i. The wrong belief that Evangelism is a specialised job, that it is confined to pastors and missionaries whereas in point of fact it is the task of the whole Church and every member.
ii. The belief that religion is a personal matter, which concerns the individual Christian, and him alone.
iii. Fear of encountering animosity and persecution.
iv. Lack of faith in the success of the evangelistic efforts proposed.

In suggesting that this was the first point of weakness in the Arab Churches, Dr. Audeh asked his audience to remember that this was far from being the only point of weakness; the division and multiplication of the various Protestant communities was also a grave disadvantage, especially in those countries where Arab Christians were only a small minority.

It had been felt advisable, at this preliminary stage, to call together in conference outstanding personalities of the Arab Churches, and not to invite official representatives. This had been done for three reasons:—

i. It was necessary for the Arab Christian leaders first to be linked in bonds of friendship and fellowship; it would then be possible to explore their reaction towards such a delicate problem as the formation of an Arab Evangelical Union.

ii. The Planning Committee thought it advisable to follow the example of the United Church of South India, which began its negotiations by holding unofficial meetings of Church leaders.

iii. The Planning Committee had felt that they should not invite official representatives of the Churches to a meeting until they had some definite policy to put before the Churches.

Three days were spent in devotional Services, in hearing reports from the different Churches, and in hearing addresses on various subjects of interest to the Churches. At the last meeting of the Conference certain recommendations were unanimously and enthusiastically approved. It was decided to form a permanent Executive Committee, to be elected by the Regional Committees as follows:—Four members each from Egypt and the Sudan, Syria and Lebanon, and from Jordan, two members from Iraq and the Arabian Gulf, making fourteen members in all. The duties of this Executive Committee will be to implement the decisions of the Conference, to study reports and schemes submitted to them by Regional Committees, and to prepare a practical scheme for unity, to be submitted to a meeting of the Conference which will be attended by official delegates of the Churches involved. The Committee should be guided in this by experience gained from other schemes for reunion—the United Church of South India and the United Church of Canada. Regional Committees were nominated with power to co-opt additional members, if necessary.

To help to achieve the aims of the Conference, it was recom-

mended that the Regional Committees should form Area Councils fully representative of the Evangelical Churches in the area, that exchange of visits should be arranged among pastors, leaders and councils in different areas, that one hymn book should be adopted by all Evangelical Churches, that general conferences should be held to discuss Church activities such as Work among Youth, Sunday Schools, Women's Meetings, etc., that the various Evangelical Churches should jointly participate in Devotional Services and Meetings—Weeks of Witness, Weeks of Prayer, Passion Week, Mothers' Day, Spiritual Revivals, etc., etc. It was also agreed that there should be a special fund to meet the requirements of the Conference.

A book in Arabic of 120 pages has been published which contains in detail the reports of the various Churches, the devotional addresses, the addresses on matters of importance to the Conference, the recommendations of the Conference, and this has been circulated to all Churches in the Near East. A summary of this book in English will, it is hoped, be available in mimeographed form before very long.

Dr. E. E. ELDER — A WORD OF APPRECIATION

E. E. Elder began his missionary career more than forty years ago, when, after graduating from Monmouth College, he came out to Egypt as a teacher in Assiut College under the United Presbyterian Mission. A short term of service was followed by a period at Princeton Seminary, and then regular appointment to Egypt under the same Board in 1914. As is normal with this Mission, he had a period of language study in Cairo, and was then sent to the town of Zagazig. Only a few years passed, however, before he was brought back to Cairo, where he spent the remainder of his time in the mission field.

It is difficult to give an adequate presentation of the many talents which Dr. Elder possessed, or to cover in a brief space the many and varied activities in which he engaged. The one which comes to mind first, at least to the minds of those who worked with him in Egypt, is his knowledge of the Arabic language. His record as a student was outstanding, and his learning far surpassed that of most Arabic students. When the newly established American University in Cairo took over the old Cairo Study Centre and made it one of the schools of the new institution, Dr. Elder was appointed by the American Mission in Egypt as its representa-

tive on the faculty. As teacher, adviser in Arabic studies and as a member of the staff, he came into close contact with new missionaries, not only those of his own Mission and other Missions working in Egypt, but also, to a lesser degree, with those working in other Arabic-speaking countries of the Near East. His ability in the language naturally led him on to another of his lifelong interests, the study of Islam. His thorough knowledge of the theological and legal books of Arabic scholars made him a lecturer much sought after by many bodies. Not only at the School of Oriental Studies at the American University and the Theological Seminary of the Evangelical Church, but also elsewhere he was called upon to give lectures and courses in this subject; his contributions to "The Muslim World" and other periodicals brought him into touch with an even wider circle of readers.

Many of us also think of E. E. Elder as an educational expert. He was head of the school for boys conducted by the American Mission in its main building in downtown Cairo, Ezbakia. This school, founded almost a hundred years ago, has made a name for itself out of all proportion to its cramped quarters and inadequate facilities. It was one of the few foreign schools rated by the Egyptian Government as competent to conduct its own promotion examinations some years ago, when these came under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education. Dr. Elder was then head of the school. As a missionary executive Dr. Elder served both his own Mission and the missionary cause in general. Several times he has been responsible for the business office of his Mission in Cairo, and for six years he served as General Secretary of the Mission. For a much longer time he served as Secretary of the Egypt Inter-Mission Council, and for seven years as Secretary of the Near East Christian Council. These last two offices brought him into close touch with the problems of the oecumenical movement, both in the Near East and in the world at large.

Dr. Elder is remembered not only for his scholarship and his executive ability, but also for his unfailing good humour and his ability as a story teller. There were few occasions when he was too downhearted to produce a story suitable to the situation, and one which brought a laugh, relieved the tension and lifted the spirits of those present. My own memories of the Elders reach back to the very beginning of my service under full time appointment. Mrs. Bailey and I, along with others, were guests in their home for our first year so that we might devote our full time to language study. For that opportunity we, together with others

of the American Mission in Egypt, must be eternally grateful. Later, when their furlough was due and the school in Ezbakia was turned over to my care, it was the careful preparation done by both Dr. and Mrs. Elder that made it possible for me to carry on. Mrs. Elder had had charge of the Boarding Department. and thanks to her excellent planning I was able to keep afloat for the year of their furlough.

To attempt to chronicle the services rendered to the American Community in Egypt, to the Evangelical Church, and indeed to Egypt herself in many phases of her life, by both Dr. and Mrs. Elder would lead us up many more avenues and cause us to exceed the limits of our space. The entire Christian Cause, in both Egypt and the Near East, has profited by his experience, his joyous approach to difficulties, and his sympathetic understanding of other people's problems through many years. We wish them both all joy and success in whatever they may undertake in the years to come.

E. M. Bailey.

GREECE

We have in the New Testament the two letters of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, and now, in a later age, Thessalonica, or Salonica as it now is, figures prominently in the Christian news. The 1954 Trade Fair in that city surpassed all the Fairs of former years; twelve foreign countries, among them Great Britain and Soviet Russia, were officially represented. For the first time since it began work in Greece the Bible Society appeared before the general public in a way other than through its depot and colporteurs. A booth measuring about twelve square metres was rented in one of the buildings. About 125,000 copies of a leaflet on the Bible were distributed free to visitors. It was not expected that there would be many sales because the majority of people who go to a Trade Fair go to see the exhibits and not to make purchases, but 208 Bibles, 232 New Testaments, and 2,262 portions were sold. All these had the text of the Greek Modern Bible which was published in May, 1954. There were not a few instances of persons who took a free leaflet and returned on the following day to buy a Bible. There was also a short broadcast from the Salonica radio station on the work of the Bible Society. Again, in another particular, history repeated itself; an old man from a village near Berea (Acts 17.10,11) came for the first time to see the Fair and bought a New Testament and a leaflet about Mary Jones.

The United Bible Societies also report that there has been a growing interest in the Bible in the Orthodox Church in recent years; this has surpassed the anticipations of even the most optimistic, and one of the most gratifying features is that an interest in the Bible is spreading among the laity. This is probably due to two comparatively recent movements in the Greek Church, which may bring to that Church a new spiritual vigour and in which it is reported that the King of Greece is keenly interested. The membership of the "Zoe" (Life) group is confined to priests and they are responsible for a number of publications; the second group, the "Light of Greece", is a laymen's group and has a membership of more than a thousand people drawn for the most part from the professional classes. They promote Bible study among intellectuals, doctors, students, and nurses; some of them have been to the œcumenical centre at Bossey, near Geneva.

T.L. Wieser represents the Swiss Friends of the Armenians in Greece, working in that country under the title "Oeuvre Suisse d'Assistance Chretienne." He is the leader of an Evangelical group which meets in conference with members of the Orthodox Church and discusses modern problems. Progress was slow at first, but the meetings have been blessed and have shown a spirit of Christian fellowship. These group meetings have what we should call a "double feature programme." At one of them an Orthodox Professor of Commercial Law spoke about Communism, and the Evangelical point of view in regard to Communism was explained by the pastor of the German Church. At another meeting the field representative of the World Council of Churches spoke of the Council's work for refugees in Greece, while the Orthodox speaker explained the "Light of Greece" movement.

"...THE POWER OF PERSIA..."

"We arrived at the foot of the mountains, at a place where we seemed to have discovered one of Nature's ulcers. A strong, suffocating smell of naphtha announced something more than ordinarily foul in the neighbourhood. We saw a river. What flowed in it, it seemed difficult to say whether it were water or green oil; it scarcely moved, and the stones which it laved were left of a greyish colour, as if its foul touch had given them the leprosy." So wrote Henry Martyn many, many years ago, and not very long before he died on October 16, 1812, at Tokat where he was given Christian burial by the Armenian clergy. Little did the man who loved the soft sea-mists of Cornwall dream of the part the scarred and burn-

ing Persian oil-fields would one day play in political history. It is interesting also to recall that when d'Arcy struck oil he announced his success to London by a reference to Psalm 104 "...oil to make him a cheerful countenance."

The Persians are not an Arab people, nor do they speak Arabic. So perhaps there is a danger that the work of the Church there may be overlooked as N.E.C.C. is mostly concerned with the Arab world. This would be a misfortune as recent reports from Iran indicate a spiritual vigour and a readiness to make experiments that must inevitably bring many to Christ. The outstanding success in recent months has been that of the Bible Study Correspondence Course, started in the autumn of 1955. This method of evangelism has many advantages—it enables the Church to keep in touch with lonely and isolated Christians, distance is of no consequence as a one rial stamp carries the message to the furthest limits of the country, it is a means of "following up" contacts with hospital patients, inquirers, and those met on evangelistic tours. Up to the present two courses have been issued; the first consists of sixteen lessons on the Gospel of St. Mark, which ensure that the inquirer buys one Gospel and reads it. There are questions of a simple kind to be answered. Several people thought that they could make a guess and so manage without buying a Gospel! But they soon found this impossible. "What did John Baptist eat and wear?" One such person thought he might get away with a vague reply—"God provided him with food and clothing suitable for a prophet"! "What occupation did Christ's first disciples follow?" "Their trade was not a mean one." But the majority of the members take the course very seriously. An Armenian enrolled and succeeded in interesting an official of the Iranian Government. The official once posted his answer and then realised that he had made a mistake. The next post brought a letter correcting his mistake!

The second course, which is rather more difficult, consists of ten lessons and is entitled "God's Plan for Man." This is particularly valuable in a land where the social conscience is far from being well developed. The aim throughout is to lead the inquirer to ask himself, "What manner of man is this?" and then to lead him on to the confession, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God." In several cases groups have been formed to discuss the course and study the questions. Your prayers are asked for the self-appointed leaders of these groups. In other cases, where many of those interested are illiterate, the leader has to read the lessons to them and write down their answers afterwards.

But the success of this experiment has brought its own difficulties in its train. Bishop Thompson remarks that very often there is no other means of reaching isolated inquirers, but as the number of correspondents increases, more help will be needed in the office to cope with the answers. A Persian typewriter is already an urgent necessity, and the cost of stationery and postage is increasing rapidly.

The Literature Committee of the Inter-Church Council has been very active in connection with these two courses, and there have been many other publications ranging from books, both for the Christian teacher and for the inquirer, to Christmas cards and reproductions of Bible pictures. The books include "The History of Christianity in Iran" by Naficy. The Mehr Ayin Bookshop in Isfahan is now paying its way, and a bookshop is to be opened in the Central Mission Compound at Teheran. But rising costs, the fall in the exchange value of the Iranian rial, and a decrease in grants may make things very difficult for the Literature Committee and limit the number of their publications.

Hand in hand with the work of the Literature Committee goes the work of the Bible Society. The Iran Agency reports increased sales and increased interest. The Scriptures, or portions, have been circulated in more than forty languages. The six colporteurs and their one assistant covered in all some 10,000 miles. One of them reports that he met somebody who said, "Twenty years ago I bought a Bible and was beaten by my father for having bought it. I used to read it regularly before going to bed, but whenever my father saw me doing so he used to beat me. I have today given full liberty to my children. They are free to read the Scriptures and choose whatever religion they like." One man, having read the story of Philip and the Ethiopian chamberlain, was much impressed; he thought about it, re-read the story and decided to baptize himself. Later he came into contact with the American Mission and was there baptized again. In one village some lantern slides of the life of Christ were being shown on the flat roof of a house which happened to belong to a Mullah. The Mullah himself invited the people to come. "You Christians are not like your Christ"—this remains the greatest stumbling—block in a population that is increasingly coming into contact with Western materialism and is increasingly literate. The behaviour of Christian nations and people who call themselves Christian is a cause of much perplexity.

The Home and Family Life Committee proposes to sponsor a "Family Week" which will be observed by all the Churches in

Iran. A series of articles on child care and child training have been published in "Nur-i-Aalam" and it is hoped that they will be issued later as a booklet. The Christian Schools are all full-indeed they are overcrowded. In Hamadan, for instance, there are more than fifty boys and girls in the primary classes which makes teaching very difficult. The greatest need is for trained teachers and leaders, young people with zeal and vision to buy up the opportunity at a time when many Iranians are finding "something different" in a Christian school, even if they cannot yet define what that "something different" is. In the matter of religious education the Daily Vacation Bible School or Joy Centre is still the best method of getting into touch with many children, Christian and non-Christian, and keeping in touch with them afterwards. Most of the Churches organize these during the summer holidays; they provide an "activity" and they are an excellent training-ground for young teachers. It is also a very good thing that the children should associate one of the happiest times in their year with religion. All "Friday Schools" have a sprinkling of non-Christian children and in come cases they are in the majority.

Most Churches have Youth Groups attached to them and it is from these that teachers must be recruited. It is generally found in Iran that Group Meetings organized on the "research method" (where each member has his or her own assignment) are more successful, more educative, and more attractive than Meetings where there is an address by a speaker. The Iran Bethel and the Jewish Nur School have been given Government recognition; the Rahmat School in Isfahan with six primary classes has been allowed to open, and there are hopes of a similar school in Shiraz.

There are good reports of work among blind people. One worker, Kokab Khanum of Isfahan, is still in America. Though she is herself blind, she has completed a teacher training course and is now doing a further course, working alongside students with perfectly good eyesight, making her own notes, and producing typewritten work. In all this she has been greatly helped by her tape-recording machine which was a gift from friends in America. The new Persian Braille introduced by Sir Clutha Mackenzie is being used, but this means that all books in Braille will have to be re-written. At Isfahan the boys' school is now under the charge of Herr Lorrner, who is a nephew of Pastor Christoffel who died in the spring of 1955 after giving most of his life to the blind people of the East. There are plans to send some women away to learn weaving and other crafts and hopes of buying land and re-building—if the money is forthcoming!

Both in Teheran and in Isfahan a Christian programme was broadcast at Christmas. Throughout the country audio-visual materials are an important weapon in the Church's armoury, and young people in Teheran have done a good job of work by preparing dialogues in Persian and recording them on a tape machine for use with cinema films. These tape recordings are played through in synchronization with the film and the result, though not perfect, is superior to any commentary given by word of mouth. One Youth Group also used a new technique in connection with a lantern talk. Slides were chosen to illustrate some definite aspect of the life of Jesus, tape recordings were made of the portions of the Gospels referring to this, various members of the Group reading parts in the conversations, suitable hymns were chosen and recorded. All this could be carefully done beforehand and proved much more finished than any oral commentary.

The Hebrew-Christian congregation of the Church in Teheran have done some very valuable evangelistic work. It was decided that once a month there should be a special Service to which members should invite their non-Christian friends and relations; Moslems have attended this Service and have even asked for the prayers of the congregation in case of family troubles or on behalf of sick friends. Much visiting is done at the time of the Jewish feasts and on the whole the Hebrew Christians are cordially received. The school flourishes and there is a special class organized for girls who have already got their elementary certificates; in this the girls learn English, hygiene, sewing, cooking, and housekeeping. In this department the teachers are all Christian.

We have left evangelism, the most important matter of all, to the last. Here there have been many opportunities as Jews and Christians have enjoyed complete religious freedom; the only religious commotion in the year 1955 concerned the Bahais. In the north the period from Easter to Pentecost was observed as a special time for evangelism and many contacts were made with non-Christians. In the summer about fifty persons shared in the life and work of the evangelistic school held in the "Garden of Evangelism" near Teheran. Both in Resht and Meshed there have been many inquiries from students and others, but, as always, this has excited some opposition. From the south it is reported that there is a change in the atmosphere. At one time it was difficult to discuss religion; people shut up like clams, probably because they did not want to be associated with anything western (even if Christianity had its birth in an Eastern land, its human agents in Iran came from the West!). This made evangelism very difficult

and the Christian community was for a time driven in on itself. But now the pendulum is swinging the other way, there is greater interest, there are more inquiries, schools are being opened with Government permission. Men and women who think are becoming conscious of the claims of Christianity and, as always in the history of the Church, the quality of Christian lives is having due effect. But there are changes—and dangers. Bishop Thompson writes; "I find it hard to believe my eyes when I think what a comparatively small place Teheran was when I first saw it forty years ago. The Government has become so centralised that anyone who wants to get anything done seems to have to go to Teheran, and the result is that it is draining the best and most progressive elements of the population from all over the country. Our Churches are feeling the consequences of this and are finding it hard to maintain their position. Teheran and Abadan are like magnets, drawing people to them on account of the better prospects of work and advancement."

TUNIS TO ALGIERS

(Based on an article by the Rev. E.F.F. Bishop, formerly Director of the Newman School of Missions, Jerusalem, in the International Review of Missions).

There are certain very noticeable differences between the countries of the Near East and North Africa. There is nationalism, of course, and agitation for independence, but there is less commercial exploitation in the more remote districts-except that the inevitable Coca-Cola is advertised with its usual efficient technique. Somebody was overheard in a public place in the Near East remarking that the only Arabic words he could read were "Shell" and "Coca-Cola"! He could hardly help it. There is, for obvious reasons, less apprehension of Zionist aggression than there is in the countries whose frontiers march with those of Israel. Jews on the whole maintain good relations with their Arab neighbours, and on the Sabbath Muslim friends do for the Jews those things that they may not do themselves. Everyone speaks French; for thousands of peasants in the villages of Kabylia the second language is not Arabic, but French. What Latin was in the days of St. Augustine and what Arabic was for centuries after the foundation of Kairouan, French has now become. This means of course that French is the main vehicle of evangelism, and that the use of the French language has opened the minds of Christian workers to all the wealth of Christian theology and European thought.

If Palestine is, par excellence, the land of the Bible, North Africa has also its many memories of past history, and especially the history of the early Church. Near to Tunis is Carthage, and the names of Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine spring at once into the mind. In those basilicas they preached the Gospel, and in that amphitheatre Perpetua and her companions suffered martyrdom. Between Tunis and Carthage is the harbour of La Roulette where Raymond Lull tried unsuccessfully to return and preach to the Muslims. But Raymond Lull found worthy successors in the White Fathers, and the statue of their founder, Lavigerie, is in Tunis, facing Africa, like the statue of Gordon in Khartoum. Tunis has also the great Zeituna Mosque, the largest Muslim educational centre between El Azhar and the Atlantic, and Tunisian student life is catered for locally in the vast majority of cases. Tunis is the birthplace of Ibn Khaldun, the greatest historical thinker of Islam and therefore, in a sense, the predecessor of Arnold Toynbee. Lavigerie and Ibn Khaldun, the White Fathers and the Zeituna Mosque—the struggle still continues. But in all Tunisia there are only twenty non-Roman missionaries, and half of them in the capital.

Maltese, Italians, French, Arabs, Jews—they are all to be found in Tunis and in the schools of Tunis. There is a churchyard with tombstones dating from the sixteenth century, among them those of the author of "Home, Sweet Home" and the British Minister who persuaded the Bey to abolish slavery. Riding their donkeys among the townsfolk are the villagers of Tunisia, and in Tunisia donkeys fetch as much as horses, and mules are worth as much again. A mule can subsist more easily on what it can find, and in mountainous districts, being more surefooted, it is more useful to man.

Then there is Kairouan, still the fourth holy city of the orthodox Islamic world, with its 148 mosques and the pillars of many of them brought from the basilicas of Carthage. Kairouan used to be so exclusively Muslim that it was forbidden to Jews and Christians, but now it has a Christian missionary family in residence, making friends and looking forward to the arrival of a printing press. You must inevitably look backward in Kairouan, for tradition has it that this city was the repository of the anchor of Noah's ark. But it is a city where people talk religion, even in the shops, as they did in ancient Byzantium, and where people talk religion readily the Christian witness is possible. The choice is still the simple one between Muhammad and the Christ. "We believe that Jesus is the Word of Allah, but you do not believe that Muhammad is His Prophet."

We must not forget Hippo, the scene of Augustine's ministry with memories of his "City of God" and the "Confessions." There is a basilica there excavated by French archaeologists; we may feel certain that it was there that Augustine preached to the North Africans of his day. But Hippo is now Bone, and very conscious of its commercial importance as the biggest port on the North African coast between Tunis and Algiers. In North Africa the Christian observer soon realises that the number of missionaries is very small and the area that is to be covered very great, and yet there seems to be more mobility than in other regions because the Church is less anchored to the institutions which she has founded and for which she is responsible. Despite distances people seem, in North Africa, to know all about each other's work—enough to pray, advise, sympathise. The almost universal use of the French language is a bond of union and a factor that can beput to use in the Master's service.

Then, in Algeria, the city of Constantine with its rocky grandeur and its thrice-bridged chasm; there is a large Jewish population with their shop signs in two languages, French and Arabic, and a Norwegian missionary reports that the Arabs and the Jews are equally friendly and equally approachable. The city is growing out towards the place where the Methodists established their girls' home, and in the years to come the importance of Constantine will increase. If a centre of Christian culture and higher education were to be founded in North Africa, it might well be at Constantine; then would be fulfilled in a richer sense the words which are found running round the gallery of one of Constantine's synagogues in Hebrew: "This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of Heaven." It is good for us also to remember that Constantine has played a part in the history of missionary co-operation in Muslim lands. For in 1944 Dr. Mott presided over the first conference of workers among Muslims in the Methodist Church at Constantine, the second conference was held in the Anglican Church at Helouan (Egypt), the third in the Friends' meeting house at Broummana (Lebanon), the fourth in the Greek Orthodox Church on the Mount of Olives. And surely the choice of places for the conferences is in itself a sign of the advance of the œcumenical movement!

One travels from Constantine to Bougie by way of Djemila. The most striking feature of the ruined Church is its baptistry, at the top of a flight of stone steps; inside, the font, at the sides cubicles in which the candidates for baptism changed their clothes, and in the middle was the bishop's throne. It is reasonable to sup-

pose that the great Augustine spoke to the Djemila Christians from that seat; it is also reasonable to wonder when the next baptism in Djemila will take place. Bougie (Bugia) is of course associated with Raymond Lull, for it was through the Saracen gate that he was taken out to be stoned to death like Stephen. Raymond Lull surely has taught the generations after him that there is a point where scholarship must merge in service.

Algeria has it many, very many, villages, and as in the countries of the Near East, the villagers are the more permanent and the more conservative element in the population, whereas the towns are to some extent "Frenchified" and cosmopolitan. The Kabyles, the fellahin of Algeria, call themselves "Luqbail," which must mean "tribes." They are Muslim, even though in many cases their Islam is little more than a veneer. They were there before the Arab invasion in the latter art of the seventh century, and before then their ancestors may possibly have been Christian, in which case one must humbly confess that their Christianity also can have been only a veneer. Farther east the Orthodox and the Coptic Churches maintained their Christian witness despite the dominance of Islam, but in North Africa there is no sign of that. Perhaps they were very half-hearted converts who would put up little resistance to the creed of the conquerors. So Kabylia may be one of those places where Christianity has not really been tested and practised. Thousands of the Kabyles live in France, where they are citizens just as the Parisians are, and from France many of them send remittances to their relatives. In Algeria they are a friendly people, always ready to give the wayfarer a welcome to the village, but their poverty is obvious to the most casual observer.

It may be that all this means that there should be greater emphasis on village work in the second half of this century. We should be devising new methods and new techniques for village missions other than occasional visits and medical work through travelling clinics. This, after all, was the method of many of the missionary pioneers, and it produced results. The two prime requisites seem to be patience and increased man-power, though the second need can often be supplied by the trained lay missionary of the country concerned. In the work of the Church, as in all else in this modern age, there is a danger of "over-institutionalism" and towns and cities have loomed too large on our mental horizon.

In Algeria and Tunisia there is plenty of room for everybody. The Christian forces are sparse and there is little danger of overlapping. North Africa is the region par excellence where Islamic

thought comes into touch with the French Christian world, both Roman and Protestant. In the French Protestant Church there is a progressively growing concern for the Muslim peoples, and the leading missions have French and Swiss members. There is much to learn from the French experiment of an industrial mission at Tizi-Ouzou; there is much to learn also from the magnificient work of the White Fathers, and there is much in their approach to the Muslim world that demands of every Christian careful consideration.

Cities like Algiers are of course the hardest nuts to crack; they seem to present to the Christian worker a combination of the worst features found in the Athens and Corinth of St. Paul's day. Yet here again there are memories of the Christian past. The Cathedral was once a mosque as in Constantine; the new mosque of the Hanifite school of Muslims was built in 1614 by Christian prisoners—which accounts for the fact that it is cruciform in shape. In Algiers too is the home of the Algiers Mission Band with the room where Lilias Trotter, the pupil of John Ruskin, thought and prayed over the problems of the Muslim and the Christian approach to him. Algeria may be a storm-centre at the present moment, but for the solution of her problems it is not Communism underground, but Christianity above ground which is necessary.

CHRISTIAN HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

The pattern of family life in the Near East is changing, and changing rapidly. That is inevitable, for everything is changing in the Near East. Marriage customs are a case in point. Whereas in the old days a young girl would marry a man many years older than herself, nowadays husband and wife are very often about the same age, especially among the educated. From the Western point of view this may seem a great advance, but it is not all gain. In the old days the young girl marrying an older man did get security—the "freedom from want" about which we talk so much; nowadays with the cost of living increasing a young couple may not be able to set up their own home, and they may both of them have to work.

Christian life is based on the Christian family, and the Christian family must have a Christian home. It is therefore the duty of any Christian institution, be it school or club or Guide Company or Scout Troop, to make young people think about what a Christian home should be. The Near East is realizing this responsibility and how much still remains to be done. In Lebanon and Syria there is an active Christian Family Life Committee com-

posed of eight nationals and four missionaries. During the past year they have conducted a seminar on Home and Family Life with the Drs. Duvall from America as consultants, and now they are hoping to open a Home and Family Life Institute. In the month of May, in the week before Mothers' Day, there was special emphasis on the Home and the Family in all schools connected with the Church. Special materials were prepared for this occasion—a play on home life, a form of Church Service for use in Sunday worship which included a litany for the family, and a book of devotions in Arabic for use in family worship. The Protestant communities were enthusiastic about the success of this experiment; many suggestions were made for the future—family night suppers, family services in Church, films on family life, and a special hymn to be written for the occasion. A questionnaire was circulated to Christian families so that through the replies given the Committee might have a better understanding of the needs of the area.

In Cairo, Egypt, there is the slum district of Boulac, a densely populated district in which the Church Missionary Society opened a Baby Welfare Clinic in 1928. At that time Boulac had a bad reputation as a haunt of vice and somebody called the area "The Devil's University". Water then had to fetched daily from public taps and it had to be paid for; so it is not surprising that cleanliness was far from universal! Rubbish was only too often left to rot and dry for use as fuel, collecting masses of flies, in the immediate vicinity of the mud oven where families did their weekly baking. There is now a trained Egyptian midwife who visits homes and gives advice to the expectant mothers who come to the Clinic. Lessons in hygiene are given by means of posters and charts; old fruit-crates which can be bought cheaply are ingeniously fitted out as cots at little cost. Many of the mothers now attending the Clinic were themselves taken there when they were babies. There are embroidery classes for girls, and work is done in eastern designs and in eastern colours. Three-quarters of the money earned by each girl is put into a bank and kept for her dowry when she marries. Some of the older women have been able through this work to keep the wolf from their door when their husbands have had to face long periods of unemployment.

The American College for Girls pays special attention to Christian family life in the Home Economics Classes, and an interesting conference was held in Minia which discussed the place of the Church in rural areas. Copts and Evangelicals joined in planning the Conference which was held in the Coptic Church.

In Iran groups of young married couples are meeting both in Teheran and in Isfahan, and in all countries there is a greater sense of the importance of Christian family life, and in this the Church has an important part to play. It is widely felt that there is great need for more literature in the languages of the Near East; in the matter of education girls and women can no longer lag behind men and boys. As an African Bishop well said at a Conference, "A people that educates its boys and neglects its girls is like a bird trying to fly with one wing".

REMEMBER THE SUDAN!

May 15, 1955, was a great day in the history of the Church. For then, in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Namirembe, Uganda, four African Assistant Bishops were consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and one of them was Daniel Deng, now Assistant Bishop in the Sudan. A congregation of nearly two thousand people filled the Cathedral, and it is believed that when the Nicene Creed was said by everybody present in his own tongue, at least thirty different languages were used. The hymns were sung simultaneously in English, Luganda and Swahili. The lesson was read by the Bishop of the Sudan in Bari. There were twelve Bishops present and they all took part in the laying on of hands. After the consecration the wives joined their husbands, to kneel beside them and to receive Communion with them. About 1800 people received Communion at the Service, and all who administered the Sacrament were tremendously impressed by the reverence of the congregation and the quietness that prevailed throughout a Service that lasted for more than three hours.

And now Bishop Deng is at work among his own people, helping Bishop Allison and tackling the many problems that confront him in a country that has only recently attained to independence. This young Church, and especially the Church in the Southern Sudan, has gone through a time of great strain and testing. "Mutiny at Torit"—we saw the newspaper headline, and then news came through of violence and disorder elsewhere. For several weeks contact with the forty missionaries of the Church Missionary Society was broken, but it is now known that they helped to allay fears, to restrain passions, and to exercise a ministry of reconciliation in desperately difficult circumstances. A Khartoum newspaper referred in a leading article to "the good work performed by the Missions during this crisis in preventing the spread of bloodshed, and giving protection to those Northerners who might otherwise now be dead." Southern Sudanese Christians were to the fore in preventing violence

and looting. In the meantime the Sudan and the growing Christian Church there should have a special place in our prayers.

TALES OF THE PIONEERS

Any visitor to Beirut must inevitably be perplexed by the rarity of street names and the almost complete absence of numbers on the various houses and blocks of flats. One gets accustomed to receiving elaborate directions, sometimes accompanied by a map, with every invitation. It is true that the appearance of the city is changing every month, but even so it is one of the things that makes life in the Near East more complicated than life at home. The first tablet put up with the name of a street on it was "Rue Bliss", and this commemorates Daniel Bliss, responsible more than any other man for the founding of the Syrian Protestant College, now known throughout the world as "A.U.B."—the American University of Beirut. It is hard to realise that the magnificent campus of the University was once described as "a home for jackals and a dumping place for the offal of the city."

When the Blisses first arrived in Beirut a report went back to the Board in the U.S.A. which ran as follows:—"The Blisses have arrived. Mrs. Bliss will not live a year, and Mr. Bliss is not a practical man." Not very long after, Mrs. Bliss was strenuously fighting a serious epidemic of measles in Suq al Gharb, saving the lives of numerous children, and showing no signs of dying within a year. Her comment on what she then did is typical—"Sympathy and calves' foot jelly are no part of the plan of salvation, but a great help in illustrating it." As for Daniel Bliss not being a practical man, it was he who made a collection of funds for the projected Syrian Protestant College both in the U.S.A. and in Great Britain, and he shrewdly used first his pounds sterling and waited until his depreciated dollars had recovered their position in the money market and were again at par. This is a very strange item of information for all those who are acquainted with the financial position today!

In 1856 there was only one house in Beirut with glass windows, and that was the house of the British consul, Mr. Abbot. At Abeih, when the seminary was first established there, the roofs were of earth over timber, and during the rainy season the missionaries had to sleep under umbrellas. It was not until much later that red Marseilles tiles were imported and used for roofing thanks to the prosperity and remittances of Lebanese emigrants abroad. Times were very different then. In the civil war between Druses and

Maronites Daniel Bliss was obliged to say, "Did you not know that there is a treaty between the great Sultan of Turkey and the King of the U.S.A.?" because any mention of a President would never have been understood. And yet times were very much the same. The road from Beirut to Damascus is notorious for the number of accidents but there were very serious accidents before ever the modern Jehu took his seat at the steering-wheel of a high-powered car. In 1891 the Damascus diligence with its six mules was hurled bodily into a field far below the road by a violent cyclone near Sofar.

At one time the Secretary of the American Board had been opposed to the erection of expensive buildings on mission ground, thinking that all money should be devoted as far as possible to direct evangelism. But when he came out to the Lebanon and saw what had been done, he changed his tune. "Brethren, you are right. These buildings are a credit to your taste and judgement. Protestantism looks as if it had come to Syria to stay and not merely to pitch a tent and then decamp." Another protest from the U.S.A was against the practice of making missionary journeys on horseback; someone thought that it would be more proper if they went humbly on foot about their work. An easy solution was found to this problem. A visitor came from America to investigate and he was taken for a vigorous walk in the direction of Shwifat on a hot day. When he was throughly tired and ready to concede that the missionaries were right and he was wrong, he was told that they must go as far as the next turn in the road. There the horses were waiting for them and they continued the journey on horseback. This was a very accurate estimate of the exact point in the journey at which the visitor would decide that the Lebanon is not entirely suited to pedestrian exercise!

The font in the National Evangelical Church in Beirut was given in memory of James Black, a British merchant who died in 1879 and was almost a legendary figure. "For forty-four years he had held aloft the standard of commercial integrity and a godly life." Dr. Jessup was once visiting Hama, and there, standing near to a Moslem shop, he heard a Moslem protesting the truth of his assertions "on the word of Mr. Black, the Englishman in Beirut." But commercial integrity is not ubiquitous in the Near East. Once W.K. Eddy reported brisk business in Sidon in the manufacture of fake Phoenician inscriptions, statuettes, vases and lamps. These were made in the city, sent out to the villages to be buried, dug up and brought in by camels hired for the purpose. Mr. Eddy reported that "they were so well made as to deceive the very elect." In 1863 there was a genuine and valuable find at Sidon, three earthenware

jars containing three thousand gold coins of the period of Philip and Alexander of Macedone. The government took most of them, but some found their way into private hands, and in a jeweller's shop in Beirut there could be seen a necklace ordered for the Pasha's wife with twenty-five gold coins, each of them twice as heavy as an English sovereign.

In medicine and surgery the American Mission led the way from the first, and in this sphere of work there was the famous Dr. Post, a man of so many varied interests that he was in grave danger of killing himself with overwork. Indeed somebody gave him advice in these words;—"Doctor, no man can carry two watermelons in one hand. You are carrying two professions, that of preacher and itinerant missionary and that of surgeon and physician. You must drop the one or the other." In addition to being one of the most skilful surgeons of the Orient Dr. Post found time to write books on Arabic zoology, surgery, and the flowers of Syria and Palestine; he also compiled a concordance of the Bible and a Bible dictionary. Truly there were giants in those day! But men like Dr. Post were then few and far between, and the Near East was cursed by quack doctors the efficacy of whose remedies was, to say the least of it, open to doubt. At one time the missionaries were puzzled by such a quack who made constant requests for old newspapers and was profuse in his thanks when they were given to him. Later investigation revealed the fact that this "doctor" had pulped the newspapers in a fieve-gallon jar, added olive oil, and then prescribed this "medicine" with the confident assertion that it worked like a charm. In connection with olive oil it was well said by another of the missionaries that "Just as Syria, once lighted by the oil made from her own olives, is now illuminated by oil, transported from America, so the light of revelation.... has been rekindley by missionaries from America."

1898 was an important year in the history of the Mission, for it was then that a Conference of Christian workers from all parts of the Turkish Empire met at Broummana. There were 196 workers present, of whom 76 were British and 57 Americans. This Conference may fairly be regarded as the ancestor of N.E.C.C. It was in 1898 also that the German Emperor made his tour of the Near East. He visited the Hospital in Beirut supported by the Knights of St. John of Berlin which is an outstanding example of missionary co-operation. The nurses were Prussian deaconnesses of Kaiserswerth, the doctors were the physicians and surgeons of the American Hospital. The German Emperor also visited Damascus where he placed a green wreath on the tomb of Saleh-ed-din and promised

to send a wreath of bronze. This arrived in due course and was placed on the tomb by senior officers of the German Army. But a devout Moslem sheikh stepped back in horror when he saw that the wreath had on it the Maltese Cross of the Knights of St. John. "Take that cross away! A Crusader's Cross on the tomb of the Sultan Saleh-ed-din! God forbid!"

Dr. Jessup remarks that "a Turkish custom-house is the best earthly type of pandemonium", and no doubt this was true in those days. There were also the difficulties of the censorship to combat. On no map could the word "Armenia" appear, and on one occasion a map of Palestine under the kings of Israel and Judah was destroyed on the ground that the Sultan Abdul Hamid could not acknowledge any kingdoms of Israel and Judah in his Empire. The missionaries protested that this referred to a bygone age and were met with the reply, "But this map was not made then. Judah and Israel did not know to make maps." Dr. Torrance of Tiberias was once puzzled by the delay in the delivery of a consignment of hymn-books from Haifa. He made inquiries and found that the Turkish customs authorities were refusing to hand them over; the hymn-books contained "Hold the Fort, for I am Coming" and clearly the only people entitled to have forts in Palestine were the Turks themselves.

In June, 1900, some converts from Islam, two men with their wives, passed through Beirut on their way to Egypt. Their old mother came with them to Beirut and after saying goodbye to her sons returned to Damascus. The letter to Damascus reporting their safe departure had to be very tactfully phrased. "The goods you forwarded to us came safely, and we shipped them to Egypt by the Khedivial steamer of June 30th., to our business agent. The large bale, which was found too old for shipment, we returned to the Damascus agent to be forwarded to you. We have great hopes of profit from the portion sent to Egypt." This was done to avoid any possibility of the relatives of the converts being persecuted.

The greatest Christian triumph of the early days was the translation of the Bible into the Arabic language at the American Press Once the Bible was there for man and women to read they could discover Christian truth for themselves. This was well known to the Moslems and the more ignorant of the village priests. One of the Syrian teachers of the Mission appealed to the Bible in a controversy with such a priest who took the Bible and pretended to read from it. "Behold, it shall come to pass in the nineteenth centu-

ry that men shall come from the lands of England and America, teaching false doctrines and turning men away from the truth. Of such be afraid." But there is also a Moslem tradition—"In the latter day faith will decay, a cold, odoriferous wind will blow from Syria, which shall sweep away the souls of the faithful and the Koran itself." Dr. Jessup comments on this:—"It way be that the wind is already blowing from the steam printing presses of Beirut."

THE PRINTED PAGE

"The printed page is a visitor who gets inside the home and stays there; it always catches a man in the right mood, for it speaks to him only when he is reading it. This printed page is deathless; you can destroy one, but the press can produce millions more; as often as it is martyred, it is raised again; the ripple started by a tract can widen down the centuries until it reaches the Great White Throne."

World Christian Digest.

"THE PROTESTANT HERITAGE"

For some time there has been felt a need for a book written in Arabic which would adequately explain for the average reader the history and principles of Protestantism and the Reformed Churches. "The Protestant Heritage" was published last summer and is the joint work of Dr. Farid Audeh and the Editor of the Torch Library, Beirut. This book covers such important subjects as the roots and principles of Protestantism, the story of the Reformation, the history of Protestant missionary pioneers in the Near East, and the Oecumenical Movement. The book can be recommended to anyone who is desirous of finding a short book that will yet be clear and definite on these vital matters; it costs £Lebanese 1 only, and is obtainable from the Torch Library, P.O.Box 235, Beirut, Lebanon.

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A school is not failing in its educational and Christian task when the teaching of biology provokes the comment of a schoolgirl: "God is more wonderful than I knew."

"Look at this gentlemen!" said Mr. Trygve Lie, General Secretary of the United Nations. On behalf of U.N. he had just accepted a gift of Bibles in different languages from Dr. Hsia, the Chinese delegate. Mr. Lie opened the English-language Bible at random. It opened at the 133rd Pslam, which he began reading: "Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is: brethren, to dwell together in unity!"

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Professor T.E. Jessop told the following story at a meeting of the British Council of Churches. A child, ignorant of religion, was asked what he had learned at his mother's knee. "I was told not to ladder her nylons", he replied.

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A man's religion is his relationship with the unseen. His creed is his explanation of that experience.

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Andrew St. Victor writes, in a prologue to a commentary, about the pursuit of truth:—"Careful seekers find her, that, carefully sought, she may be found again. None may draw her forth in her completeness, but by degrees. The fathers and forefathers have found her: something is always left for the sons and descendants to find. So always: she is sought, something is still to seek; found, and there is something still to find."

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